



Tuesday, 29 September 2020  
Issue 43.0

## 1. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Melbourne Restrictions Eased

Melbourne has entered the Second Step towards reopening, Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews has announced.

Under an accelerated roadmap out of Melbourne Stage 4 lockdown, 127,000 residents will be able to return to work – although VACC members should be aware that the automotive industry restrictions remain mostly the same.

Key restriction changes:

- **Face coverings:** Must be a fitted face mask that covers nose and mouth – not a face shield (a week's grace period has been put in place, to give residents time to organise masks).
- **Curfew:** Has been lifted, as of 5am on 28 September.
- **Essential Shopping:** No limit on the number of people from one household.
- **Education:** VCE and VCAL students return for assessments from 5 October. Prep to Grade 6, specialist school students, and VCE/VCAL students return onsite from the week of 12 October.
- **Public gatherings (outside):** A household or limit of five people from two households allowed. Penalty for illegal gatherings outdoors and in the home increased to nearly \$5000.
- **Exercise:** Exercise allowed within five kilometres of the workplace (permitted workers), as well as the home.
- **Industry:** Worker reduction will no longer apply to warehousing, postal and distribution centres, supermarket and food distribution.
- **Sole traders:** Gardening, landscaping and garden maintenance (not automotive) businesses have been added to the permitted worker list.
- **Vehicles:** As previously announced, scheduled and logbook servicing and safety inspections allowed for boats and vehicles.
- **Reasons to leave home:** The four primary reasons to leave home still apply, as does the five kilometre radius:

Shop for food and necessary goods or services.

Provide care, for compassionate reasons, or to seek medical treatment.

Outdoor exercise or recreation.

For permitted work or education.

Members are advised to rely on the most recent news stories and Bulletins only, as government advice and regulations will continue to change as the COVID-19 situation develops. The advice above was correct at the time of publication.

For more information members can view the Premier's statement [here](#).

### **Changes to Retail Leasing Amendment Act**

Following changes under the [Retail Leases Amendment Act 2020](#), a landlord can now pass on to their tenant the costs of repairing, maintaining and installing as part of a fit-out, essential safety measures (ESM).

ESM include smoke detectors, sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, fire exit signs and annual safety inspections.

Members should be aware that this can only happen if the lease and disclosure statement or annual estimate of outgoings make note and require the tenant to do so.

An amendment to the [Retail Leases Act 2003](#), these changes apply to new and existing leases – however, landlords are unable to recover ESM costs that they have already paid.

For more information on this announcement, members can click [here](#) to read more.

## **2. INDUSTRY RELATIONS**

### **Applications open for Sole Trader Support Fund**

Applications are now open for the Victorian Government's \$100 million Sole Trader Support Fund.

Non-employing Victorian sole traders – within eligible business sectors – operating out of a commercial premises or location may be eligible for a \$3000 grant through the program.

The aim of the fund is to support Victorian sole traders working in industry sectors that have been restricted, heavily restricted or closed as a result of the State Government's continued COVID-19 restrictions, as outlined in Victoria's roadmap for reopening.

Specifically, grants aim to assist with overhead costs and utilities, and VACC urges members to review grant information including the [program guidelines](#) and the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Approximately 30,000 Victorian businesses are expected to receive a grant through the Sole Trader Support Fund.

Members can read more [here](#).

### **Small Business Insolvency Process Updated**

The Federal Government has announced plans to overhaul insolvency rules, in a bid to make it easier for small businesses to restructure or wind up.

In line with the recommendations outlined in the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO)'s Insolvency Practices Inquiry [final report](#), the new rules will give business owners more time to recover – preventing a wave of unnecessary insolvencies.

The ASBFEO recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic, among other factors, has driven many businesses to the brink and has therefore pushed for more protections for small businesses needing to restructure, but unable to gain immediate access to an insolvency practitioner.

The announced reforms will:

- Allow small businesses to restructure their debts while remaining in control of their business.
- Reduce the threat of creditors taking action against a small business impacted by trading restrictions.
- Extend temporary relief for directors from any personal liability for trading while insolvent.
- Make the liquidation process quicker and easier for businesses that must close.

Members can read more on this update [here](#).

### **3. INDUSTRY SUPPORT**

#### **Infection Control Training to Assist Victorian Businesses Beginning to Return to Work**

As Victoria begins to emerge from coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, businesses and workers need to ensure they can safely reopen and engage with customers.

Chisholm is now offering a free, short, accredited Cross-Sector Infection Control Skill Set (BSBSS00095) delivered through a mixture of online and workplace-based learning, available to help staff in critical industries identify and manage the ongoing risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) infections. This training is government subsidised.

This targeted course is available to employers and workers in Victorian businesses where COVID-safe practices are vital. There is a focus on six priority sectors (retail, accommodation and food, transport including postal and warehousing, construction, manufacturing, health care and social assistance.

After successfully completing this course, participants will receive a Statement of Attainment for the nationally accredited unit: BSBWHS332X Apply infection prevention and control procedures to own work activities.

For more details and to enrol, members can click [here](#).

#### **New Funding Pledged to Help Businesses Advance Digital Offerings**

The Morrison Government is pledging \$800 million to encourage the use of new technologies.

The funding is geared towards moving Australia's post-COVID economy towards online platforms. It's hoped the technology investment will transform key industry sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and logistics.

Estimates from US consulting firm McKinsey suggest that during the peak of pandemic lockdown, the world adopted technology that would have otherwise taken five years in the space of eight weeks.

A large portion of the \$800 million will go into making government services such as myGov easier and more secure to use, however the package will also include \$419.9 million for businesses to update their digital systems enabling them to quickly view, update and maintain their registry data in one location.

Read more on this story [here](#).

#### **4. PREVIOUS UPDATE ISSUES**

You can read previous Updates of COVID-19 [HERE](#).

**Geoff Gwilym**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Disclaimer:** *The information gathered has been drawn from a number of sources and VACC strongly recommends that members revert to the primary source of information for any clarification.*